

# HOW DID WE GET HERE?

## *A Short Course on Church History*

### The Church Gathered: Scripture, Leadership, and Worship, Part 2

#### Hebrews 10:23-25 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> Let us **hold fast the confession** of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to **meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

#### I. SCRIPTURE AND THE EARLY CHURCH

##### A. "canon" =

Because of their roots in Judaism, Christians already affirmed \_\_\_\_\_ ...

Their only question ...

Christians immediately accepted the writings of the \_\_\_\_\_ ...

#### 2 Peter 3:15-16 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Early Christians also recognized the \_\_\_\_\_

The standard? 3 main criteria:

- 1) Written by ...
- 2) Agrees with ...
- 3) Already functioning as ...

A 4<sup>th</sup> criteria ...

##### B. Our confidence in the canon

1. The faithfulness of God ...
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ data ...

*Today there exist no strong candidates for addition to the canon and no strong objections to any book presently in the canon. Of those writings that some in the early church wanted to include in the canon, it is safe to say that there are none that present-day evangelicals would want to include.*

### C. Early challenges and heresies

Marcion ...

Pseudepigrapha ...

Hebrews ...

Revelation ...

Other books ...

The first written document we have that list all 27 books of the New Testament is Athanasius' *Easter Letter 39*, written in 367 A.D.

## II. LEADERSHIP AND THE EARLY CHURCH

**Two offices** – deacons and elders

*“You must, then, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord; men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well-trying. For their ministry to you is identical to that of the prophets and teachers”*

- *Didache*

All the churches of a city were under the care of a “bishop” ...

In theory, all bishops were equal, but in practice ...

Very early in church history, \_\_\_\_\_ became the preeminent city (and thus had the preeminent “bishop”).

### III. THE CHURCH FATHERS

#### 1. **Apostolic** Fathers – taught by the Apostles

- a. Ignatius of Antioch
- b. Polycarp of Smyrna (*Letter to the Philippians, Martyrdom of Polycarp*)

#### 2. **Apologetic** Fathers

- a. Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho, First and Second Apologies*)
- b. Athenagoras of Athens
- c. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies*)
- d. Tertullian (*Apology, On Patience, On Prayer, To the Martyrs, On the Spectacles, etc.*)
- e. Clement of Alexandria
- f. Origen

#### **John 14:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.